

§35 LANDSCAPING, SCREENING & BUFFER AREAS

Revised 12-03-10

35-1 Intent

The following standards are intended to enhance the appearance and natural beauty of the Town and to protect and increase property values through preservation of existing vegetation and establishment of new screening and landscaping material. Specifically, these standards are intended to moderate heat, noise, glare and accumulation of dust, to shade, to provide privacy from noise and visual intrusion and to prevent the erosion of the soil, excess run-off of drainage water and the consequent depletion of the ground water table and the pollution of water bodies, watercourses, wetlands, and aquifers and to guide the safe circulation of cars and people to parking lots.

35-2 Uses Requiring Special Permit and/or Site Plan Approval

The following provisions shall apply to all uses requiring Special Permit and/or Site Plan approval, including any non-residential use.

35-2.1 General

All portions of a lot or property which are not used for locations of buildings, structures, accessory uses, off-street parking and loading areas, sidewalks or similar purposes, shall be landscaped and permanently maintained to minimize storm water runoff and to improve the appearance of the Town as a whole. To the extent possible, existing specimen trees shall be retained and protected and incorporated into the landscape scheme.

35-2.1.1 Official Plans

All landscaping plans shall conform with the "Greening of the Post Road Tree Program", as amended, and any other officially approved street planting plans, where applicable.

35-2.1.2 Installation

All plant materials shall be installed according to accepted horticultural methods and planting areas and beds shall be mulched to a minimum depth of one and one half (1 1/2) inches. Sprinkling or permanent watering systems are encouraged.

35-2.1.3 Maintenance

All plantings shown on an approved Site Plan shall be maintained in a healthy growing condition and all fences and walls shall be maintained in good physical condition throughout the duration of the use. Plants, fences or walls not so maintained shall be replaced with new materials no later than the beginning of the next immediately following growing season.

35-2.2 Front Landscaping Area

35-2.2.1 Location

The required front setback area, as measured from the property line, except for sidewalks and perpendicular driveways, shall include a minimum thirty (30) foot deep front landscape area along all streets, as shown on the attached "Landscape Design Standards." Such landscape area shall be retained and is to be used for no other purposes.

- (a) In cases where the edge of pavement or curb within a street right-of-way does not coincide with the front lot line, the applicant shall, in addition, landscape the area between the front lot line and the edge of the street pavement or sidewalk in such a manner as will not obstruct vehicle sight lines.
- (b) In a BCD Zone the minimum required front landscape area shall be reduced to twenty (20) feet in depth along streets other than the Post Road.
- (c) For multi-family developments under §32-12 and §39A, the minimum required front landscape area may be reduced to twenty (20) feet in depth. See §32-12.11 and §39A-14.

35-2.2.2 Standards

All front landscape areas shall have at least one (1) shade tree for each fifty (50) feet of front length (measured parallel to the street line) and shall be setback at least ten (10) feet from the street line.

35-2.2.3 Type A Plants

The desired effect of this type of planting is partial visual screening and partial separation. Plant materials shall consist of shade trees, flowering trees and/or low broad leafed or needled evergreens planted with ground cover and may include evergreen trees as shown on the attached "Landscape Type Standards." The trees may be planted in groups, however, the spacing between trees or groups of trees shall not exceed fifty (50) feet. Shade trees shall not be planted under or within fifteen (15) feet of overhead utility lines. Each required shade tree shall be at least four (4) inch caliper as measured six (6) inches above the root crown. Each flowering tree shall be ten (10) feet to twelve (12) feet in height at the time of planting. Street trees shall be high branched with at least six (6) feet of clearance from the ground to the first branch. Low broadleaf evergreens shall not exceed thirty six (36) inches in height.

35-2.2.4 Sidewalks

Concrete sidewalks at least five (5) feet in width shall be installed within the front landscape areas as shown on the attached "Sidewalk Design Standard" unless deemed unnecessary by the Commission. Such sidewalks shall provide handicapped ramps at all driveways and intersections, shall be aligned at the property line and shall be relocated around poles and fire hydrants.

35-2.3 Parking Areas

35-2.3.1 Location

On-site parking areas shall be planted with shade trees that are located entirely within the parking field as shown on the attached "Landscape Design Standards" except that no more than one required tree shall be located in each field corner.

35-2.3.2 Standards

All parking areas shall have at least one (1) shade tree for each ten (10) required off-street parking spaces. Each such tree shall be located in a porous island, esplanade, pot(s) or well(s) at least nine (9) feet in diameter or nine (9) feet on each side.

35-2.3.3 Type B Plants

The desired effects of this type of planting are to screen interiors of parking areas to provide shade for the protection of pedestrians and vehicles. Plant materials shall

consist of shade trees planted with ground cover as shown on the attached "Landscape Type Standards." The trees shall be evenly distributed throughout the parking area and shall be protected from vehicle bumpers. Each required shade tree shall be at least four (4) inches caliper as measured six (6) inches above the root crown and shall be high branched with at least six (6) feet of clearance from the ground to the first branch.

35-2.3.4 Sidewalks

Sidewalks at least three (3) feet in width shall be installed within the site to provide walkways between parking areas and other principal or accessory uses when deemed necessary for public safety. Such sidewalks shall provide handicapped ramps at all driveway and intersection crossways. Where deemed appropriate, curbing shall also be installed. Unless otherwise approved, all sidewalks and curbing shall be of reinforced cement concrete and shall be constructed at all locations, to the dimensions and in accordance to specific details approved by the Town Engineer.

35-2.4 Buffer Strip

35-2.4.1 Location

A buffer strip shall be required along and within all Non-Residential District boundaries immediately adjacent to a Residence District and may be required along and within the rear, and/or side lot lines on any Special Permit use. Such buffer strip shall comply with at least the following minimum provisions.

- (a) The buffer strip shall be at least fifteen (15) feet in width and shall be retained as an integral part of the development project and is to be used for no other purposes.
- (b) A berm, mound, hedge, wall or six (6) feet high fence of suitable location, height, design and materials as determined by the Planning and Zoning Commission may be required in conjunction with any portion of the required planting and/or buffer strip.

35-2.4.2 Standards

The buffer strip shall include evergreen plantings with at least one tree for each ten (10) feet of buffer length as measured parallel to the property line.

35-2.4.3 Type C Plants:

The desired effect of this type of planting is complete visual screening of the activity on the lot. The planting shall consist of evergreen trees at least eight (8) to ten (10) feet in height as shown on the attached "Landscape Type Standards." Non-evergreen planting and/or a screening berm, hedge, fence, or wall at least five (5) feet in height may be used in conjunction with the evergreen trees. The evergreen trees shall be planted at ten (10) feet on center. The evergreen trees may be grouped or staggered at intervals provided that the spacing between groups is filled with a screening hedge, berm, fence, or wall at least 5 feet in height.

35-2.5 Protection from Vehicles

When vehicles will be located adjacent to sidewalks, fences, walls, buffer strip, trees, landscaping, or similar obstructions, a suitable bumper, curb, wheelstop or similar objects shall be provided in such a location that the vehicle cannot overhang or otherwise damage said plantings or obstructions.

35-2.6 Sight Lines

These minimum required front, parking and buffer landscape areas shall not obstruct vehicle sight lines and shall be planted with trees, shrubs, and other materials of a type and height as required herein.

35-2.7 Quality and Methods

All required plantings shall be of species and varieties as approved by the Landscape Committee of the Planning and Zoning Commission and shall be installed in accordance with the standards of the American Nurserymen's Association.

35-3 Design Development Districts

For any use in a Design Development District, the required buffer strip (§35-2.4) shall be located between the proposed buildings, structures and uses and adjacent residential districts and shall be increased in width by ten (10) feet for each additional fifty (50) required off-street parking spaces, or major fraction thereof, over and above the first one hundred (100) required off-street parking spaces. No buffer area shall be required to exceed one-hundred (100) feet in width. Furthermore there shall be a distance buffer of at least one hundred fifty (150) feet between any proposed commercial building and the nearest existing or probable residence in a residential district. A parking lot may extend to within fifty (50) feet of any existing or probable residence in a residential district.

35-4 Landscaping of Developed Sites

To the greatest extent possible, the minimum landscape requirements contained in this Section shall be adhered to for any Site Plan application involving the expansion or structural alteration of an existing building and/or a new use or change of use for a developed site.

35-5 Landscape Modifications

Existing trees may be used to satisfy the landscape requirements provided they are protected during construction and the area within five (5) feet of the tree trunk consists of porous materials to permit adequate drainage.

35-5.1 Modifications

The Planning and Zoning Commission, upon written request, may modify the location, number and/or type of plantings required for any front, parking or buffer landscape area where the existing natural topography, existing natural vegetation and/or a proposed alternative method such as a berm, mound, hedge, fence or wall at least five (5) feet in height can be reasonably shown to achieve the applicable landscape objectives as identified in this §35. The Planning and Zoning Commission, however, shall not reduce the minimum width of a front landscape area, the minimum dimensions for parking, planting areas or the minimum width of a buffer strip except as follows: The Planning and Zoning Commission may reduce the width of a buffer strip to not less than five (5) feet, only when said strip is located adjacent and parallel to either a residential zoning district boundary line or an existing street, road or vehicular right-of-way, provided that existing natural topography, existing natural vegetation,

existing street trees, and/or a proposed alternative method can be reasonably shown to achieve the required buffer and/or screening objectives along said boundary line or street.

35-5.2 Required layout

Prior to granting any modification or reduction of these landscaping requirements by the Commission, the applicant shall submit a preliminary standard car parking layout with all required landscape areas pursuant to §34-7.1 herein, in order to substantiate that the proposed project can, in fact, comply with these regulations prior to any such landscape modification.

35-6 Other Landscape Plan Elements

Any preliminary or final landscape plan required under these regulations shall show all required landscape areas plus the following additional elements, as applicable:

- 35-6.1** Lighting fixtures including location, height, fixture design, materials and illumination.
- 35-6.2** Free-standing signs including location, height, design, colors, materials and illumination.
- 35-6.3** Refuse collection areas including dumpsters, screening and vehicle pick-up maneuvering areas. Any refuse collection area should be located near or adjacent to the buildings loading area and/or service entrance.
- 35-6.4** Mail box clusters including location, height and design.
- 35-6.5** Ground-mounted mechanical units including cooling towers, air-conditioning units, compressors, etc. with their locations and heights.
- 35-6.6** Other similar site improvements such as wall, fences, fire hydrants, utility poles, walkways, etc.